

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

*Re: TV White Spaces Demonstration, July 19, 2012*

To Julie Knapp, John Leibovitz, and the staff of OET, thank you for informing us about the progress that the industry is making on implementing operations in the TV White Spaces. All of this is great news for those Americans, who live in sparsely populated rural communities, and low-income urban areas. To date, licensed communications companies have not developed profitable business plans to serve these areas. So, the successful development of TV White Space databases and devices gives us hope that these underserved communities will be moving closer to enjoying the affordable advanced communications services that the vast majority of Americans already enjoy.

I find last month's announcement of the AIR U initiative very exciting, because we all recognize the fact that universities that are located in certain rural areas are struggling to find access to affordable broadband networks. This challenge often makes it more difficult, for these institutions, to attract the best faculty and students. By employing unlicensed TV White Space services, the AIR U initiative can offer a low-cost means to provide these universities with increased coverage and capacity. In addition, the initiative will stimulate and aggregate demand in the adjacent community. All of this will encourage greater investment in, and development of, new services. So I join a host of others in congratulating the New America Foundation, GiGU, the United Negro College Fund, Google, Microsoft, and the other founding members of AIR U, for developing such a creative partnership to assist rural universities and promote the development of White Space services.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge that this announcement also underscores the public interest merits of a bi-partisan effort that Representatives Anna Eshoo and Darryl Issa led to ensure that the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 contained statutory provisions to protect unlicensed spectrum. I commend Representatives Eshoo and Issa for their leadership on this issue. As their February 2012 letter stated, it is estimated that unlicensed spectrum generates between \$16-37 billion each year for the U.S. economy. In November of last year, the Consumer Federation of America issued a report, which found that Wi-Fi offload resulted in wireless carriers not having to construct 130,000 cell sites. This resulted in annual cost savings of more than \$25 billion. Staff presentations, such as this one, show that this Commission understands the value of unlicensed spectrum to our economy, and that we are committed to encouraging the development of more advanced unlicensed services in the TV White Spaces.